Saturday 11.30 - 12 M
Mar. 25, 1944

- CASEY, PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER -

"Star Witness"

by

Alonzo Deen Cole

Script No. 37

CUE: COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM
(..... 30 seconds .....)

CASEY: (COLD) Face the camera, please...hold it!

SOUND: FLASH BULB & SHUTTER CLICK

CASEY: Thanks. (FADING) You'll see it in the Morning Express.

ANNC'R: The adventures of CASEY— PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER!

MUSIC: UP...THEN UNDER & BACK

ANNC'R: Columbia brings you another adventure of CASEY, PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER. Tonight, and every Saturday at this time, Columbia invites you to follow Casey on his exciting assignments and to meet the strangely assorted people who pass in swift moving parade before the shutters of his camera. Tonight— (ORGAN EFFECT) —"Star Witness!"

MUSIC: OVERTURE TO DRAMA...SET & UNDER

ANNC'R: It is nearly six o'clock in the evening. In the big, untidy room that is the outer chamber of the Morning Express's Photographic Department, several men sit idly at battered looking desks. One of the men is Casey...and he is reclining rather than sitting— his feet comfortably elevated to the top of his desk, when the door opens and—

SOUND: DOOR OPENED & CLOSED...OFF

MAN: (HALF OFF) Hello, Miss Williams.

ANN: (OFF...FADING HALF ON) Hello, Wade. That Casey hiding behind those feet?

MAN: (CHUCKLING) That's him. He's catching up on his beauty sleep.

ANN: The lazy hound! (FADING FULL ON) Hey, Big Boy— wake up!

CASEY: (AROUSED FROM SLEEP...DROWSILY) Huh? Oh— 'lo, Ann.

ANN: You invited me to dinner tonight...remember? I've been waiting upstairs in the City Room for almost ten minutes.

CASEY: (CONTRITELY, BUT NOT FULLY AWAKE) I'm sorry, kid. It's been a dull day — not much doing...(YAWNING)...I must have dozed off.

ANN: You did that, alright. (A SMALL YAWN) It's been dull upstairs, too...I've only had three little assignments.

CASEY: I've only had one. (CONTENTEDLY) I like days like this.

ANN: I dont...I'd rather be doing ~~something~~ something.

CASEY: That's the trouble with you women— always restless, looking for excitement. (YAWNING) Give me a life of placid ease— nothing to do but eat and sleep.

ANN: Snap out of your siesta and <u>let</u>'s eat.

CASEY: Okay...I'm in the mood to demolsih a steak right now.

SOUND: TELEPHONE RINGS...RECEIVER UNCRADLED AT *

CASEY: (STILLY SLEEPILY) 'Scuse me. (*) Hello.

2nd MAN: (ROUGH DISGUISED VOICE)..ON FILTER) Casey?

CASEY: Yeah.

2nd MAN: If you wants get yourself some swell news pitchures, get up to 517 Polton Avenoo before half pas' six t'night.

CASEY: Wha—? (ALERT) Who's this talking?

2nd MAND: Never mind who it is. I'm givin' you a straight tip...mark down this address an' dont ask questions.

CASEY: Okay...you said—

2nd MAN: 5-1-7 Polton Avenoo. Be where you can watch the outside of th' place by 6.30— that's only half a hour from now...<u>and pick a spot to watch from where ye'll be under cover</u>. Got it?

CASEY: Got it.

2nd MAN: That's all.

CASEY: Thanks.

2nd MAN: G'bye.

SOUND: DISCONNECTION ON FILTER...MIKE RECEIVER CRADLED AT *

CASEY: Hmm. (*)

ANN: Anything important, Casey?

CASEY: Might be...might not be— you never can tell about these tips.

ANN: Tip?

CASEY: I've done little favors for a couple guys, Ann...some of em pay off by slipping me inside information on their rackets. When a tipster wont tell who he is and tries to disguise his voice, like the guy who just called me— he's usually either a crook or a practical joker. Anyway, I'll have to hand you a rain check on that dinner, Ann...I've got a 6.30 date on Polton Avenue.

ANN: Say, Mister— if you think enough of this tip to follow it up, I'm going to follow it with you.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SOUND: FADE ON AUTOMOBILE, APPLY BRAKES & CUT MOTOR...OPEN CAR DOOR AT *; CLOSE AT **.....VERY DISTANT STREET EFFECTS IN BACK

CASEY: We'll park the car here, Ann, and walk around the corner into Polton Avenue.

ANN: Okay. (*)

CASEY: Wait a minute— I want to stick this camera and plate case under my overcoat...when a newspaper guy follows up stiff of this kind, it's sometimes better if he doesn't look too much like a ~~newspaper~~ newspaper guy. (SLIGHT PAUSE) All set. (**)

SOUND: LIGHT WALKING EFFECT...CUT AT *

ANN: This is a beautiful old fashioned neighborhood, Casey.

CASEY: Yeah...a lot of big dough lives in this section. Here's Polton. (PAUSE) 517's the fourth house on the other side.

ANN: That brownstone mansion.

CASEY: Uh huh. And here's a made-to-order place for us to watch it and be out of sight...step through this gate as though you lived here— we'll stand behind those stone pillars.

ANN: The street's absolutely deserted— except for that bakery wagon down the block.

CASEY: I guess most of the big shots who live around here are still wintering in Florida. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Just 6.30 now.

ANN: What do you think will happen?

CASEY: Probably nothing.

ANN: But shouldn't you have notified the police that something <u>might</u> happen here?

CASEY: Ann, if I called the cops about every anonymous tip I got, I wouldn't have a friend left on the Force. And, if this one's on the level, it doesn't necessarily mean we're going to see anything crooked. (CHUCKLES) I know that's tough on a gal who likes excitement.

ANN: (A SMALL SIGH) I was more or less prepared for a wash-out when I saw these elegant surroundings...nothing much <u>could</u> happen on a street like this. (PAUSE...ADMIRINGLY) Mmm... look at that car coming— Isn't it something?!

SOUND: FADE ON SOFT, ULTRA EXPENSIVE MOTOR— WHICH MEANS PRACTICALLY NO EFFECT AT ALL...HALT HALF OFF AT *. OPEN ITS DOORS AT **. CLOSE DOORS AT ***.

CASEY: That chariot set someone back about 15 grand./ (*) (ALERT) It's stopped in front of 517. (**)

ANN: Two men are getting out.

CASEY: (SLIGHT PAUSE) <u>Three</u> men...and the third guy is Kito Montana.

ANN: The racketeer? (***)

CASEY: He's the rat who makes every green vegetable you buy in this town cost just a little bit more...those other gorillas are his bodyguards—

SOUND: MACHINE GUN FIRE— OFF

ANN: (CRIES) Casey—!!

CASEY: A tommy-gun!!!

ANN: The back of that bakery truck is open!

CASEY: A guy's standing inside it blasting Montana and his rods!— He's got em...(SLIGHT FADE)...they're down!! (*)

ANN: Where are you going???

CASEY: (HALF OFF) To get a picture of the guy in that truck—

ANN: (TERRIFIED) Casey,he sees you...he's turning his gun— (SCREAMS)

SOUND: MACHINE GUN RESUMES...~~EXCEPT~~ DROP CAMERA...CUT GUN AT *

CASEY: He's hit my camera— shot it from my hand—!!

ANN: Get back here!!!— he'll get you!!

CASEY: (AT MIKE) He only missed me by a whisker! (*)

SOUND: ROAR OF MOTOR OFF...FADE QUICKLY ON. RESUME MACHINE GUN AT *... CUT AT ** & QUICKLY FADE OUT MOTOR;ALSO AT ** A POLICE CAR SIREN, FAR OFF— IT FADES SLOWLY ON,REACHING MIKE AT DISTANT CUE ***

CASEY Flatten yourself behind the pillar,Ann— the truck's coming this way!! (*)

ANN: He's in front of us— shooting in here!!!

CASEY: His bullets cant go through this stone work—! (**)

ANN: A police siren!!

CASEY: The truck's going around the corner!!

ANN: (TERRIFIED RELIEF) Oh,Casey— if that man with the gun had gotten out of the truck and come in here—!

CASEY: Maybe you think that didn't occur to me! Did you get a good look at the guy with the tommy-gun?

ANN: No— I was too frightened...I dont know whether he was black, white, red or yellow.

CASEY: That's swell...and you tell the world you cant identify him— it's sometimes dangerous to know too much about a gangster killing!

ANN: You didn't get a good look at him,either?

CASEY: Me? I know every button on his vest.

ANN: But you wont say so—

CASEY: (ANGRILY) Oh,wont I! Look at my camera on the sidewalk— he shot it to pieces! (***)

ANN: But you just said—

CASEY: Here's the police car—!

COP: (SLIGHTLY OFF) Hey,you!!— di you see this shooting??

CASEY: You bet I did!

ANN: A man with a tommy-gun,Officer— in a bakery truck—

COP: Bakery truck?

CASEY: He's probably abandoned it by now for another get-away car! Get Headquarters on that radio of your's and have Lieutenant Logan broadcast this description of the killer!— a guy bigger than I am— about 6 feet,three;weight about 250;(FADING) a crooked nose;dark brown hair;at least one gold tooth in front——

MUSIC: BRIDGE

LOGAN: Here's some more guys we just picked up,Casey. Is your man among em?

CASEY: That's him,Logan— the third from the left.

MUG: (SNARLS) Why you pointin' a finger at me?? I never seen you before! I aint done nothin'!

CASEY: (EASILY,SLOWLY BUILDING) Listen,mug— I dont mind you killing Kite Montana...I forgive you for shooting at me...but maybe THIS'LL teach you not to bust good cameras!!

SOUND: A HEAVY BLOW & A FALLING BODY

MUSIC: BRIDGE

LOGAN: (FADING ON...QUIETLY ANGRY) Casey,if you ever sock another guy here in Police Headquarters,I'm going to put you in the crummies cell we've got— and forget you're there.

CASEY: (CONTRITELY) Okay,Logan...I told you I was sorry right after I did it. I— that was a swell camera.

LOGAN: Humph.

CASEY: You've been questioning that guy for an hour while I've sat here in your office cooling my heels— What's he told you?

LOGAN: He denies everything,of course...his kind never tells you anything you want to know— at first. (SLIGHT PAUSE) But I got one interesting little item from him.

CASEY: What?

LOGAN: The lawyer he wants to get in touch with for his defense is— Sam Marshall
Dan Thrail.

CASEY: Thrail? Say— wasn't he Kite Montana's ~~kmx~~ mouthpiece??

LOGAN: More than that— he was Montana's boss. Thrail gives orders to half the crooks in this town,only we cops have never been able to prove it.

CASEY: I know that,but— Let me get this straight,~~Mr~~ Logan: Thrail is Montana's lawyer,his boss...yet the guy who killed Montana wants to get in touch with him?

LOGAN: Uh huh...and here's another interesting circumstance:— You dont miss many bets,Casey...I suppose you inquired who lives in the house at 517 Polton Avenue. Name was slipped in proof.

CASEY: Sure— a rich widow by the name of Bronson...she's out of the city now— and most of the time. Montana getting out of his car there to be bumped off didn't make sense.

LOGAN: (RATHER SMUGLY) You newspaper experts dont know everything, do you? Mrs.Bronson is Dan Thrail's sister.

CASEY: Yeah?

LOGAN: And <u>he</u> really owns the house...it's one of his several business headquarters.

CASEY: (DAWNING COMPREHENSION) O-oh.

LOGAN: Off the record,we've heard that Montana has been getting too big for his shoes lately— he hasn't been taking Thrail's orders,as he used to...and Thrail doesn't stand for that sort

(CONT'D)

LOGAN: (cont'd) of thing. But he's the kind who always seems to be friendly until the knife is in your back. I think he invited Montana to 517 for a "business conference" and had that bakery truck waiting.

CASEY: Thrail will have a perfect alibi, of course.

LOGAN: Sure. But you, Casey, as an eye witness of first class respectability (and I hate to admit that!)— you will destroy any phoney alib that's been propagated for his hired killer. And his hired killer may tell us some things we'd like to know about Mr. Thrail if Mr. Thrail doesn't beat this rap for him.

CASEY: Yeah...when he begins to see the hot seat moving toward him, he might try to send Mr. Thrail there instead.

LOGAN: (CONTENTEDLY) And all because you were on the spot, Casey.

CASEY: (UNCOMFORTABLY) Did you say "WERE on the spot", Logan? Dan Thrail isn't a nice guy to buck.

LOGAN: (SERIOUSLY) Ordinarily, I'd want such a star witness as you locked up for safe-keeping, Casey...as it is, watch your step. And here's a gun I want you to carry.

CASEY: Keep the rod, Logan...I never have much luck with those things. But from now on, I will look up and down before I cross the street

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SOUND: BAR ROOM EFFECTS...PIANO BEHIND— HOLD UNDER

ETH: Hello, Casey.

CASEY: (FADING ON) Hi, Ethelbert. How about a little drink?

ETH: Can do. Say— I see by this mornin's paper, the trial of that guy who killed Montana has been set for the end of next week.

CASEY: That's right.

ETH: Will you rise and shine then! You been gettin' a lotta publicity outa that case as its star witness, pal.

CASEY: (DRYLY) I've also been getting a few other things.

ETH: Them threats, you mean. Miss Williams told me you'd got a couple ann-onny-mous letters and phone calls warnin' you not to identify that guy in court.

CASEY: This morning, the boys who are so interested in me stopped being nasty and got nice...they phoned an offer of 10,000 bucks for a little lapse of memory.

ETH: And you turned it down.

CASEY: What could I do with that chicken feed?

ETH: Mmm. With a choice between ten grand and maybe a bullet in the back, I'd say— quote: "It's very attractive dough."... period...unquote.

CASEY: I'm not worried about any bullet in the back...the rats who work for Dan Thrail dont figure they take much of a chance when they bump off another crook, but they know the heat is put on hard when they shoot up guys like— well, I've at least kept out of jail.

ETH: Still and all, I— Here comes Miss Williams! Hello—

ANN: (FADING ON...VERY WORRIED) Hello, Ethelbert. Casey, this letter just came to the office for you, by messenger...Wade signed for it and gave it to me— we think it may be another threat.

CASEY: Stop bothering about those threats.

ANN: There's no return address on the envelope— like those others. Open it, see what's in it...and dont tell me not to be bothered!

CASEY: Okay.

SOUND: ENVELOPE TORN OPEN

CASEY: (SLIGHT PAUSE, THEN LAUGHS) Look at the heavy threat that was in here, Ann.

ANN: Nothing but a pair of theatre tickets.

CASEY: And to a hit show we haven't been able to wangle ducats for— they're for "Arizona"!

ANN: Tomorrow night!

CASEY: And 5th row center— on the aisle!

ANN: I've been crazy to see that show! Who do you suppose sent those to you?

CASEY: I told several guys with "ins" I wanted tickets...it's funny there's no name on the envelope or a note enclosed. But it doesn't matter as long as we've got em. Oh, I haven't asked you— Would you like to go with me, Ann, or shall I invite my Aunt Mary?

ANN: Mister, when you sit in 5th row center, on the aisle tomorrow night, I'm going to be right beside you.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SOUND: BIG APPLAUSE— DYING AWAY...THEN BUZZ OF CONVERSATION— HOLD UNDER

ANN: (HAPPILY) Wasn't it a grand first act, Casey!

CASEY: Swell, Ann. Let's get out in the lobby and have a cigarette.

ANN: Okay.

CASEY: (SLIGHT PAUSE) It's good to stretch the legs...they never make theatre seats quite big enough.

ANN: You've squirmed so, you've made your shirt front all bulgy.

CASEY: (UNCOMFORTABLY) I shouldn't have let you talk me into wearing this waiter outfit...in a boiled shirt, I always feel— embalmed.

ANN: How could I have worn my new dress if you hadn't put on dinner clothes?— I'd have looked funny sitting beside you.

CASEY: But I'd have been comfortable.

ANN: Stop kicking...everyone else is dressed properly and making no kifuss about it. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Casey, look at the jewels on some of these women...(LOW)...That fat gal just ahead of us has a diamond collar on her neck that— (ENVIOUSLY) —mmmmMM.

CASEY: It's a flashy choker alright.

ANN: (SIGHS) Why wasn't I born rich instead of beautiful.

CASEY: If you had been, you'd never get to first base with particular guys like me.

ANN: Humph. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Your tie's crooked again...I'll ~~straight~~ straighten it for you if we can find a place in this lobby where I can move my arms.

CASEY: It's sure crowded ~~in~~ here— Ooomp!

MAN: Sorry, old chap— didn't mean to push you.

CASEY: Okay...okay—

MAN: (FADING) Pardon...let me through, please...sorry—

ANN: (IRRITABLY) Where's he going in such a hurry that he almost knocks people over?

CASEY: There's always one of his kind in a crowd— ((LOW, TENSE) Ann— see that very tall, gray haired guy standing near the door.

ANN: Yes.

CASEY: That's Dan Thrail.

ANN: (TENSE) Thrail?

CASEY: Yes—

WOMAN: (MIDDLE-AGED, HYSTERICAL TYPE...SHE SCREAMS— HALF OFF)

ANN: Casey, that fat woman—!

WOMAN (CRIES) My necklace!!— I've lost my diamond necklace!!

ANN: That choker we noticed on her neck—!

CASEY: It's gone!

WOMAN: Police! Police!! My diamonds have been stolen!!!

ANN: Stolen?

SOUND: CROWD REACTION THROUGHOUT THIS SCENE

WOMAN: Police!!! Police!!!!!

COP: (OFF...FADING ON) Let me through! Let me through! I'm a detective, ma'am— What's the trouble?

WOMAN: My necklace has been stolen— it cost $30,000!!

COP: Maybe you only lost it—

WOMAN: I dont know!— but I know it's gone!! Dont just stand there— FIND IT!!!!

COP: (PROJECTING) Please step back,everybody— clear this lobby! The necklace may have fallen to the floor and—

THRAIL: (ABOUT 40;QUIET,CULTURED,EASY— AND VENOMOUS...FADING ON) Excuse me,Officer— but I dont think you'll find this lady's diamonds on the floor.

ANN: That's Thrail.Casey—

CASEY: Why is he butting into this—?

THRAIL: I'm taller than the average,so was able to observe something that others in this crowd failed to notice,perhaps...I saw a hand unclasp the necklace from this lady's throat and I suggest you search— <u>that man</u>.

CASEY: Me???

ANN: Casey—??

CASEY: What are you trying to pull,Thrail???

THRAIL: You know my name,sir!— I haven't the pleasure of your acquaintance.

CASEY: (FURIOUS) You'll find it wont be a pleasure if you dont take back whatyou just said!!

COP: Wait a minute,Mister!! If what this gentleman says is wrong it wont be hard to prove it...let's see what's in your pockets!

CASEY: Okay,frisk me...but when he doesn't find anything,Thrail,I'm going to drag you out on the sidewalk and—

THRAIL: But he <u>has</u> found something.

ANN: Casey—!!

WOMAN: That's my necklace!!!

COP: /ROUGHLY) How did these diamonds get in your inside coat pocket,Mister?

CASEY: I— This is a frame-up!!

COP: That's what you guys always say when we find the goods on you! Mister, you're under arrest.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

LOGAN: (SYMPATHETICALLY) Calm down, Casey...calm down.

CASEY: (BITTERLY) That's easier to say than to do, Logan.

LOGAN: I know that, but use your head...there isn't a cop here at Headquarters who believes you stole those diamonds— except mabe the dumb cluck who found em on you and brought you here.

CASEY: I've been booked as a thief just the same.

LOGAN: What else could we do under the circumstances? But I dug up a judge right away and got you admitted to bail...and if your paper hadn't put up immediate bond, I'd have done it myself.

CASEY: (QUIETLY) I know...and thanks, pal. (PAUSE) Oh, Im just sore at myself, Logan!— I walked into this frame-up like a hick who'd lived in the woods all his life! Those theatre tickets— it was Thrail who sent em to me...and I used em. That guy who pushed against me so hard in the lobby— he planted the diamonds in my pocket that he'd just taken from the fat dame's neck... and I didn't get wise. I saw Thrail there...and didn't figure what was up. (PAUSE) Well— now I wont make much of a witness against the guy who killed Montana.

LOGAN: (DESPONDENTLY) No...Thrail, as his lawyer, will tear you to pieces before a jury. He can call a hundred reputable people who were in that lobby to testify those diamonds were found in your possession...and, by the time those people get to court, some of em will imagine they saw you steal the diamonds.

CASEY: Yeah...and when I'm brought to trial myself— they'll send me up for plenty years.

LOGAN: You're not in a very good spot, Casey...law and justice dont always mean the same thing.

CASEY: (PAUSE) That dame who lost the diamonds, Logan— Do you think she was a stooge of Thrail's?

LOGAN: No...I've had her looked up and she seems A-one. Thrail's too clever to have used a plant...one respectable complaining witness against you is worth a dozen who couldn't stand investigation.

CASEY: (THOUGHTFULLY) If Thrail's so clever, why didn't he have someone else put the finger on me instead of doing it himself? That should look pretty phoney to the jury in the Montana case— the defendant's attorney a personal witness against the only witness who might send his client to the chair.

LOGAN: Thrail will get around that, Casey— he's a wizard with juries. And he accused you himself because he got a kick out of doing it...you'd crossed him, you hadn't fallen for either bribes or threats, you'd made him sore. The guy has a power complex— a blown-up conceit...he wanted you to know, without any possible doubt, that it was Dan Thrail who was paving you off.

CASEY: (SLOWLY...SOFTLY) He's that kind of a guy, huh?

LOGAN: Yes. That's why I'm pretty sure that Thrail, personally, gave the order to the guy who killed Montana. Thrail didn't dare bump Montana off himself— Kite always had his bodyguards around; but he made his murder as personal as he could... the killing was done in front of a house that Montana knew belonged to Thrail— when that tommy-gun began to pop, Kite didn't have any doubts about who was really behind it.

CASEY: Hmm...if Thrail got really sore at someone, he might take a pretty long chance.

LOGAN: He might. (SLIGHT PAUSE)..SHARPLY) What do you mean?

CASEY: Logan, for the first time in my life, I'm an accused thief...and the evidence against me cant be laughed off. I've got to prove

(CONT'D)

CASEY: (cont'd) this thing is a frame...and I'm a little like Mr.Dan Thrail— I like a personal pay-off.

LOGAN: What's on your mind,Casey??

CASEY: Only a notion— so far. (BRISKLY) Well,I'm free on bail so I'll say goodnight...(FADING)...I've got thing to do in the morning.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

GIRL: (AN OFFICE RECEPTIONIST) I'm sorry,sir,but unless you have an appointment I'm sure Mr.Thrail wont see you. If you'll give me your name—

CASEY: (GRIMLY) Never mind the name. Is that Thrail's private office in back of you?

GIRL: Why,yes—

SOUND: OFFICE GATE OPENED AS:

CASEY: That's all I want to know.

GIRL: You cant open that gate!!— get out of here!

CASEY: Sorry,sister.

SOUND: DOOR OPENED

GIRL: Get away from that door—!!

CASEY: Hello,Thrail.

THRAIL: (SLIGHTLY OFF...STARTLED) What—? Casey!

CASEY: You know my name now,huh? Get up from that chair,Thrail... I'm going to pay you a fee for services rendered.

THRAIL: (TO MIKE) Jim...Butch— HELP!!

CASEY: Here's the first installment!!

SOUND: HEAVY BLOW & FALLEN BODY...OTHER BLOWS,CRASHING FURNITURE FOLLOW

MUGS: (TWO OF EM...FADING ON) What is it,Boss...what—??

CASEY: These guys are your bodyguards,huh? I've got something for them,too! (KOCKOUT BIZ) Now,Thrail,I'll close your account!

THRAIL: Help...help—!!! (BLOWS)

GIRL: CRIES) Police...Police— a man is killing Mr.Thrail:!!

CASEY: I still owe you some interest for those services,Thrail, but I'll save that for later! (FINAL BLOW & CRASHING BODY)

GIRL: Help...murder...Police— POLICE!!!

CASEY: (BREATHING HARD) I'll wait here until you get a cop,sister... but you'd better call a doctor,too— that's what your boss really needs right now.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

LOGAN: You've made a fine mess of things now,Casey...Thrail will have your hide for the beating up you gave him!

CASEY: I think he'll try to get it,Logan~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

LOGAN: There's no doubt of that...he wouldn't prefer charges against you when the cops got there. And that means—

CASEY: I think it means he'll gun for me himself...and that's exactly what I want him to do.

LOGAN: Then you're crazy!— that guy's more dangerous than a rattlesnak ~~xxxxx~~ ...he'll get you when you're not prepared—

CASEY: I dont think so...a rattler cant stop his tail from sounding-off before he strikes— it's part of his nature.

LOGAN: What do you mean?

CASEY: Logan,before I went to Thrail's law-office this afternoon,I spent a lot of hours making inquiries about the guy...I found out that three men he had very personal grudges against "committed suicide".

LOGAN: I could have told you that! And we've always thought the suicides were phoney— that Thrail really bumped em off;only we couldn't prove it.

CASEY: Since he's been successful at staging phoney suicides,he's likely to try the same gag on the next guy he wants to get rid of,dont you think— on me?

LOGAN: Go on.

CASEY: People usually do the German in their own homes...Thrail made his act look good by shooting those three guys in their own homes.

LOGAN: Hmm.

CASEY: Crooks stick to patterns that have paid-off for them,Logan, and a rattler always shakes his tail the same old way. (PAUSE) Have I given you an idea?

LOGAN: (SLOWLY) Yes. And a good idea,Casey...if you it doesn't put you in a coffin.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SOUND: AUTOMOBILE...HOLD UNDER— ALSO UNOBTRUSIVE STREET EFFECTS

CASEY: Ann,I'm going to quit driving you home nights if you dont stop worrying about me all the way.

ANN: I cant help it,Casey. During the day,at the office— well,I know you're alright...but,after you leave me at night and go to your apartment,I— Oh,I wouldn't worry about you so much if- if you seemed to worry about yourself a little more.

CASEY. (MOCK GRAVITY) Okay,kid...I'll start worrying hard— right now.

ANN: Dont joke about it— it's not funny.

CASEY: (SERIOUSLY) Now,listen,Ann— Logan's working with me on this... there isn't the slightest danger.

ANN: How can you say that?— you and Logan have cooked up schemes before that have gone wrong...you've gotten your signals mixed or something has happened that you didn't expect.

CASEY: They usually came out all right in the end.

ANN: Because you've been lucky! You cant be lucky always,Casey... sometime you'll— well,there just wont be any next time.

SOUND: CAR STOPS...DOOR OPENED AT *

CASEY: Forget it. Here's your getting-out place. (*)

ANN: Dont take me to the door tonight-- dont get out of this car.

CASEY: Why—?

ANN: I dont want you to. I- I guess I'm thinking of how Montana and his men got out of their car that day and—

CASEY: No one's going to get me that way—

ANN: You dont know! Please do as I ask.

CASEY: (GENTLY) Okay,Ann.

ANN: Now promise you'll drive straight home and- and be careful.

CASEY: Alright.

ANN: Phone me as soon as you get to your apartment and let me know that— everything's okay.

CASEY: I'll do it before I even take my coat off. Goodnight,kid.

SOUND: CAR DOOR CLOSED...CAR STARTS.

ANN: Goodnight,Casey.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SOUND: THE RATTLE OF KEYS...DOOR UNLOCKED & OPENED...LIGHT SWITCH... DOOR CLOSED...NUMBER DIALED ON PHONE

ANN: (ON FILTER) Hello.

CASEY: Casey reporting,Ann.

ANN: (RELIEVED) Oh— you're home.

CASEY: Just came in the door and everything's calm and peaceful. I'm going to pour myself a night-cap ~~right~~,then hit the feathers. - Go to bed yourself and get some sleep...I'll see you tomorrow.

ANN: Alright. Thanks for calling,Casey.

CASEY: Goodnight again,kid.

ANN: Goodnight.

SOUND: RECEIVER CRADLED

THRAIL: (HALF OFF...QUIETLY) Put up your hands,Casey.

CASEY: Wha—? (SLIGHT PAUSE) Hello,Thrail.

THRAIL: Put up those hands.

CASEY: Okay.

THRAIL: (FADING ON) I took the liberty of entering your apartment with a special key I had one of my— clients make for the purpose...I've been waiting in your bedroom— for you to come home.

CASEY: I cant say you're— (SLIGHT MOVEMENT)— very welcome.

THRAIL: (QUICK & SHARP) Dont move! I know,from personal experience, that you're a rather dangerous man...I have no intention of permitting you to get closer to me than you are at present. Sit down— there at the table...and put your hands on the table where I can watch them.

CASEY: I cant argue with that gun of your's.

THRAIL: No...you cant. Now,we'll have a little talk...that is,I'll talk.

CASEY: I'm listening.

THRAIL: I dont want the conversation to be too uncomfortable for you,so— I heard you say you meant to have a night-cap before you— went to sleep...~~and that will be soon.~~ Thanks your whiskey bottle is on that table— and glasses...help yourself.

CASEY: Thanks.

SOUND: SMALL DRINK POURED

THRAIL: Casey,you're going to be found dead here in the morning...an apparent suicide.

CASEY: Yeah?

THRAIL: (PURRING NOW) There'll be a bullet in your brain...this gun will be beside you,with your fingerprints upon it— and a farewell note,in your handwriting,will be upon that table.

CASEY: How are you going to get the note?

THRAIL: I already have it. Among my clients,there is a talented forger ...he found your writing quite easy to duplicate after— another client obtained some original samples for him.

CASEY: I see.

THRAIL: Drink your drink, Casey...you cant look forward to many more.

CASEY: Thanks for reminding me—

THRAIL: Hands above the table, I said!!! (EASY AGAIN) That's better. (CHUCKLES) You gulped that drink so quickly, you must have needed it.

CASEY: May be I did. (PAUSE) Mind telling me what's in that "farewell note" you had forged?

THRAIL: On the coontrary— I wish to tell you! It contains a confession Casey— two confessions. First: that you falsely identified the man who is now under indictment for killing Kite Montana.

CASEY: You've got to free that rat, haven't you, Thrail? If you dont, he's liable to sing to the cops that Montana was bumped off at your personal order.

THRAIL: Yes. I dont mind talking freely to you under the present circumstances, Casey.

CASEY: And my number-two confession, I suppose, is that I snatched that fat dame's necklace.

THRAIL: Not only that necklace...the note says that you have been an unsuspected thief for years and that discovery of your— uh — Jekyll and Hyde existence at the theatre that night is the reason for you are— blowing your brains out.

CASEY: Do you expect the cops to believe that?

THRAIL: I never care what the cops believe!— only what I can make juries believe. (VINDICTIVELY) But even the police may doubt your innocence when they find stolen goods in your apartment.

CASEY: Stolen goods??

THRAIL: While I was waiting for you to get here, I distributed several valuables about the place that have been reported stolen by their owners.

CASEY: (GRIMLY) You dont miss many bets,do you.

THRAIL: Not when I'm dealing with anyone like you! For that beating you gave me,Casey,I'm not only going to kill you.I'm going to destroy you! Your family will be pointed out as the family of a thief...your best friends will doubt you...the people you've worked with will—!

CASEY: Wait a minute,Thrail! You've forgotten just one thing— to make me look like a suicide,you've got to press that gun against my head when you pull the trigger...the medical examiner's got to find powder burns,a contact wound! And you dont dare come close enough to me for that— you know how badly I want to get my hands upon you!

THRAIL: (SILKILY) You might also have reminded me that there is no silencer upon this gun and that the sound of a shot might interfere with my get-away. But,you see,I have deviated from the method I employed in other- "suicides"...I dont intend to shoot you,Casey.

CASEY: Huh?

THRAIL: The drink you tossed off a few minutes ago makes shooting unnecessary.

CASEY: (STARTLED) Whatdo you mean??

THRAIL: /The bottle of rye contains enough poison to kill a regiment.

CASEY: Poison??

THRAIL: (RAPID,TRIUMPHANT) A slow action poison without an antidote— a poison that paralyzes the muscles before it strikes the brain! Try to get up from that chair,if you can!

CASEY: I— I cant.

THRAIL: In a matter of moments,you will lose consciousness...I'll destroy that bottle of whiskey and leave a small,half emptied vial of the poison beside you— the medical examiner will have no doubt at all that your death was self-inflicted!

CASEY: I—! I——!! (A GROAN)

SOUND: BODY SLUMPS TO FLOOR

THRAIL: (CHUCKLES SOFTLY) I thought it was about time for the drug to produce its final symptoms. You've been paid-off, Casey—as I always pay off. There's no danger from you now, so I'll place the poison vial beside you and— (A SHARP CRY) Ahh!!

CASEY: It isn't smart to believe a possum's dead just because he acts that way!! And now, Thrail—!!

SOUND: A SINGLE HEAVY BLOW & A CRASHING FALLING BODY

CASEY: (PROJECTS) Okay, Logan— (*) —you and the boys can pick up the pieces!

SOUND: DOOR THROWN OPEN AT * ABOVE

LOGAN: (QUICKLY FADING ON) Casey, when we heard Thrail say you'd swallowed poison—!!

CASEY: That's when I'd have given you the signal we agreed on, Logan—if I'd really swallowed it.

LOGAN: But those other "suicides" had been shot—!

CASEY: I had a hunch when he was decent enough to suggest a drink— and dropped the glass out of sight long enough to spill the whiskey on the floor before I seemed to gulp it down. You know the old gag, Logan— "The hand is quicker than the eye". Then Thrail told me how the poison acted and— I acted.

LOGAN: Just the same, you should have given the signal before you did.

CASEY: Then there'd have been shooting. This furniture cost me dough!—I didn't want my joint wrecked!

LOGAN: Some day, Casey, you're going to gum things up for keeps!

CASEY: Dont be a pessimist— people wont like you. You heard everything Thrail said, of course.

LOGAN: We didn't miss a word...Farrell here took it all down in shorthand and there's six of us here to swear to it.

CASEY: That finishes Mr.Dan Thrail...only— Logan,when he comes to,do you mind if I take just one more sock at him?— this isn't Police Headquarters.

LOGAN: You've already paid him off— with interest.

CASEY: There's something I forgot to include in the account,pal.

LOGAN: What?

CASEY: That poison of his has ruined almost a full quart of doggone-hard-to-get rye whiskey.

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SOUND: BARROOM EFFECTS,PIANO BEHIND...HOLD UNDER

ETH: So Dan Thrail is in the jug,Casey...and the skids are all greased for his launchin' towards the blister-chair?

CASEY: That's right,Ethelbert...and several thousand decent lawyers in this town are going to be at the dock,waving flags,when he completes his slide.

ANN: (A SIGH OF RELIEF) Me,too.

ETH: (CHUCKLES) You been kinda worried about Casey,aint you,Miss Williams?

ANN: Ethelbert,have you ever owned a monkey?

CASEY: Monkey?

ETH: No.

ANN: Well,I did once. He was an awful trouble...he used to break things— he got under my feet— I never knew what he'd do next— he was an all-around nuisance. But I got used to him and missed him when he wasn't around. I'm used to Casey now.

CASEY: (PAUSE...HUMBLY) Ethelbert,if you dont mind serving apes— can I have another drink?

ETH: (VERY GRAVELY) We-lll,we try to run this bar pertickiler,but— as my sister,Edna,says— quote: "When folks are in business,a customer is a customer— so dont bother about his fam'ly tree or whether his fam'ly lived in trees."

CASEY: I get the drink?

ETH: You get the drink.

ANN: Ethelbert—

ETH: Yes, Miss Williams?

ANN: Serve it in a coconut.

MUSIC: BUILD UP FOR FINISH

- THE END -

By:

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